

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 ASMARA 00545 191448Z

45

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 EB-07 OMB-01 AID-05 PC-01 IO-10 /088 W

----- 099449

R 191345Z JUN 75

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3401

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY LONDON

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

COMNAVTELCOM

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN

COMIDEASTFOR

NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA

NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0545

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, ECON, ET

SUBJECT: ERITREA - THE ROAD TO MASSAWA

1. ON TWO RECENT ROUND-TRIPS ALONG ASMARA-MASSAWA ROAD, AUTHORIZED BY MILITARY AUTHORITIES, I WAS ABLE TO VERIFY ROAD CONDITIONS AND USAGE. ROAD SURFACE IN EXCELLENT CONDITION. NO PRECEPTIBLE DAMAGE AT ANY POINT. ONLY EVIDENCE OF EARLIER INTERFERENCE WITH ROAD TRAFFIC IS REMAINS BURNED OUT TRUCK AND GASOLINE TANKER WITH TRAILER AT ABOUT EIGHTY-SEVEN (87) KLM MARK.

2. AT THIS TIME THERE PERMANENT CHECKPOINTS AT ASMARA, DONGOLLO AND MASSAWA. TEMPORARY CHECKPOINTS ALSO ENCOUNTERED AT VARIOUS POINTS NEAR MASSAWA AND DONGOLLO. PASSES NO LONGER REQUIRED BUT I.D. CARDS CHECKED AND SEARCHES NORMALLY MADE OF VEHICLES. I HAVE BEEN EXEMPTED FROM LATTER.

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PAGE 02 ASMARA 00545 191448Z

3. THERE IS CONSTANT MOVEMENT BY MILITARY IN CONVOY ALONG ROAD. I SAW 2ND DIV ARMY TROOPS, PARATROOPERS, COMMANDO POLICE, AND REGULAR POLICE. FREQUENT ARMY PATROLS SEEN ON PLAIN AND STRONG POINTS ESTABLISHED ON KEY HEIGHTS ALONG ROAD BETWEEN MASSAWA AND DONGOLLO. TROOPS APPEARED WELL EQUIPED, CHEERFUL, AND ALERT. SOME, I LATER LEARNED WERE RETURNING FROM ENGAGEMENTS WITH INSURGENTS NEAR DECAMERE.

4. MASSAWA ITSELF IS IN ECONOMIC DOLDRUMS. RELATIVELY FEW SHIPS NOW STOP THERE; MOST FOREIGNERS ARE GONE; FOOD SUPPLIES ARE ADEQUATE BUT LIMITED. GOVERNOR OF MASSAWA, ON WHOM I CALLED, EXPRESSED HOPE THAT OPENING OF SUEZ CANAL MIGHT BRING SOME SORELY NEEDED BUSINESS ACTIVITY TO MASSAWA IF PORTS FORMER RESUPPLY ACTIVITIES COULD BE RE-ESTABLISHED. HE RECOGNIZED, HOWEVER, THAT CURRENT EMERGENCY WILL PROBABLY PREVENT ANY MARKED INCREASE IN PORT CALLS. PRODUCTION OF SALT AND FISHING CONTINUE ALTHOUGH FISHING FLEET CONSTRAINED BY NAVY.

5. POL PRODUCTS ARE, HOWEVER, ARRIVING IN MASSAWA AND REGULAR LARGE TRUCK CONVOYS UNDER MILITARY ESCORT BRING FUEL TO ASMARA SEVERAL TIMES A WEEK. I OBSERVED SEVERAL OF THESE CONVOYS, EACH CONTAINING TWENTY-FIVE OR MORE TRUCKS.  
SHERRY

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